



THE BULAWAYO MAYORAL ELECTION AND MAKONI WEST BY-ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR 8-9 SEPTEMBER, AND THE CHIKOMBA BY-ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR 22-23 SEPTEMBER. IF THIS IS THE CASE, CAMPAIGN OBSERVERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER OBSTACLES SUCH AS POLICE CORDONS AND "NO-GO" AREAS IN THE ELECTION DISTRICTS, POSSIBLE HARASSMENT BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS, AND GOZ REFUSAL TO ACCREDIT OBSERVERS (WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT THEM FROM GOING WITHIN 100 METERS OF ANY POLLING PLACE). ELECTION OBSERVERS DESIGNATED TO OBSERVE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL LIKELY ENCOUNTER SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES SUCH AS FREQUENT  
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CHANGES AND DELIBERATE CONFUSION OVER ACCREDITATION AND OBSERVATION RULES, GOZ REFUSAL TO ACCREDIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE, AND HIGH GOVERNMENT FEES. ONCE IN COUNTRY, THEY MAY BE TURNED AWAY AT POLLING PLACES DESPITE ACCREDITATION OR MAY ENCOUNTER HARASSMENT BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS.

1D. (C) WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) PLANS TO INFLUENCE THE REPORTING OF CAMPAIGN OBSERVERS OR ELECTION MONITORS, ALTHOUGH IT IS CERTAINLY IN THE PARTY'S INTEREST TO EXAGGERATE REPORTS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION.

12. (C) COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GOZ HAS INFORMED US OF ITS INTENTION TO ALLOW ELECTION OBSERVERS, THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THESE "OBSERVERS" MIGHT BE NOR WHETHER THE GOZ DRAWS A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN "OBSERVERS" AND "MONITORS." IN ANY CASE, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT FOR POLICY REASONS WE MUST TEST THE LIMITS THAT THE GOZ AND ZANU-PF MIGHT TRY TO IMPOSE ON OUTSIDE MONITORS AS THE ONLY POTENTIALLY CREDIBLE WAY TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE UPCOMING ELECTION. END COMMENT.

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